



FLORIDA INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE

Preserving the natural ecosystems and wildlife of Florida by coordinating Audubon resources and prioritizing actions in order to stem the tide of non-native invasive species.

Non-native invasive species of plants and animals have been responsible for major ecological and economic problems worldwide. Their threat to biological diversity is ranked second only to habitat destruction, and the cost of control in the United States alone is estimated at over \$138 billion annually. Florida has some of the greatest numbers of invasive species in the country, presenting an urgent need among conservation groups for a coordinated effort to address this present and ever-growing threat to our native wildlife and ecosystems.

In October 2009, Audubon of Florida launched a new Invasive Species Task Force to further the collective effort in the battle against exotic invasive species that plague our environment, the economy, and even the safety of Florida residents. Our goals are to:

1. Identify gaps in invasive species science & management, and develop strategies to fill those gaps,
2. Develop and use scientific information to strengthen and guide advocacy efforts on Florida state laws and regulations, and
3. Act as a catalyst for coordination and cooperation among the diverse interests working on invasive species issues.

Audubon of Florida has already forged partnerships with other conservation agencies, but for the battle against invasive species to be successful, we need as many people involved as possible. This is where you – as Audubon chapters – are particularly important! Chapter members participate in wildlife watching field trips, bird and butterfly surveys, volunteer workdays at public lands and sanctuaries, and outreach events. Some of you are already doing air potato roundups and other exotic plant removal. We would like to focus our efforts to combine the valuable information and knowledge you access when you are out there doing what volunteers do. Here are some areas where we would like to invite you to contribute.

Audubon chapter members are needed to:

- Monitor and report non-native invasive species – through wildlife watching field trips, bird counts, etc. you are the “eyes and ears” involved in citizen science that can help track the spread of nuisance wildlife.
- Eradicate invasive species – by participating in regularly scheduled volunteer events, you can greatly help by pulling or treating invasive weeds or (if you are bold) by participating in python round-ups.
- Provide education outreach to the general public – whether it is distributing fliers at public events, organizing unwanted pet amnesty days, or conducting programs for school children, you can help fulfill the greatest need of all...getting the word out.

As chapter members, you are the greatest strength of Audubon! A representative from Audubon of Florida’s Invasive Species Task Force will be visiting your local chapter soon to provide further information and answer any questions you might have. We sincerely hope as many of you as possible will join the fight to protect our native wildlife and environments from the threat of non-native invasive species.

If you miss one of our presentations to local Audubon chapters and would like to help, please contact either:

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